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GOVERNOR RENDELL REMINDS RESIDENTS TO BE AWARE OF DANGEROUS LIGHTNING

Proclaims June 22-28 as "Lightning Safety Awareness Week"

HARRISBURG – Citing lightning strikes as a significant weather threat, Governor Edward G. Rendell has proclaimed June 22 – 28 as Lightning Safety Awareness Week in Pennsylvania.

"Every year, Pennsylvania ranks among the top 10 states in lightning strike deaths and injuries," said Robert P. French, director of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. "There are basic things people can do to protect themselves from lightning and the summer storm season is a good time to review those safety steps."

The National Weather Service recommends that anyone indoors follow these tips when lightning is in the area:

- Do not use corded phones.
- Unplug valuable electronic equipment before the storm.
- Do not bathe, wash dishes or do laundry.
- Stay away from windows and doors and do not sit on a porch.
- Do not leave pets outside, particularly dogs chained to a tree or wire runner.

Anyone outdoors should seek shelter inside a sturdy building or a hard-topped car – not a pavilion, carport, shed, or convertible. If safe shelter is not available, stay away from water, high ground, and wooded areas, and do not stand up in open areas. Instead, crouch low to the ground and stay at least 15 feet from other people.

If you hear thunder, you are at risk for a lightning strike. When planning outdoor activities with family and friends, those plans should include making sure everyone knows what to do in case storms develop.

“Before heading out the door, check the weather forecast and, if possible, take a radio with you so you can monitor the forecast throughout the day,” said French.

Additional severe weather safety information can be found at www.pema.state.pa.us.

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